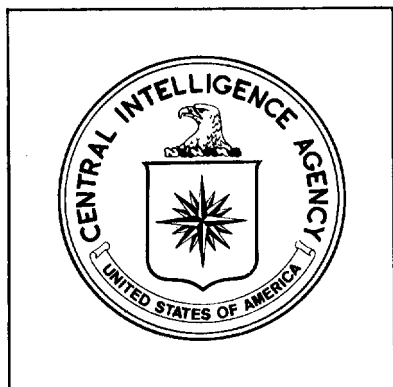


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International Narcotics

REGIONAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

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This publication is prepared by analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence for specialists in the Washington community who are interested in international narcotics matters. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Opium Poppy Cultivation in the Bekaa Valley



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LEBANON: Poppy Cultivation in the Bekaa Valley

Opium poppies are being cultivated around Dayr Ammar in the Bekaa Valley, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Hashish production has long been prevalent, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] in this area that is now occupied by the Syrian-dominated Arab Security Force. Earlier reports indicated that Turkish families had been brought into northern Lebanon to cultivate opium poppies in the vicinity of Al Hirmil. [REDACTED]

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A number of Lebanese farmers who formerly cultivated hashish may have switched to opium production for the higher profits and because normal channels for moving bulky hashish crops were disrupted by the civil war. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] more than 700 hectares of poppies are under cultivation in Lebanon, but US embassy officials in Damascus believe that this figure is high.

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[REDACTED] The US Drug Enforcement Administration believes Egypt would be the most likely recipient of any opiates produced in Lebanon. [REDACTED]

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NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

INDIA

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Significance: India is the world's largest producer and exporter of legal opium and will produce about 1,200 tons in the current crop year, ending this month. Most of the opium will be exported.

Opium is collected, processed, and sold under government supervision, and Indian officials claim that not more than 1 percent is diverted to illicit channels. Outside experts generally agree that controls are reasonably effective; however, they suspect that internal diversion may be as much as 10 percent. Most of this is used domestically, but some is smuggled to Sri Lanka and the Persian Gulf Emirates, and no more than perhaps a few kilos reach the US annually.

Some opium reportedly is smuggled into India from Pakistan and possibly Burma. There is also a substantial transshipment of Nepalese hashish through India to the US, Canada, and Europe.

Problem: India tries to balance its production effort to meet the world demand for medicinal opium against possible diversion to illegal international channels. In 1976 the government allowed only 3,500 additional acres for poppy production, bringing the total authorized acreage to 138,000. India is reluctant to increase production significantly, largely because of the responsibility for control.

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The Indian government is cooperating with the US in efforts to control illicit hashish traffic but hesitates to even discuss the extent of opium smuggling from India. US officials are concerned about the potential impact of illegal Indian opium. If only 1 percent of India's opium production illegally entered the US, it would represent almost 12 tons of opium or 1 ton of heroin--about 15 percent of the estimated annual heroin consumption of the US.

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Prospects: Indian opium gum production will probably expand slowly. India has exported limited amounts of codeine since 1975 and probably will gradually increase the amounts available for export. India also is developing a poppy straw industry and may open a plant in the next year or so. About 15,000 tons of poppy straw are exported annually, but India apparently does not plan to shift entirely from opium gum to poppy straw.

US-Indian cooperation in opium matters appears to be improving slightly, mainly in the exchange of information about smuggling.

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There have been some recent indications of Indian interest, however, in participation in a regional training program under UN auspices.

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LAOS

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Significance: Laos is a minor producer of raw opium. Most is consumed locally by an estimated 100,000 drug users among the population of three million.

Problem: The main problem has been the new Communist government's lack of commitment to suppression of opium production. During the struggle that ended in the Communist takeover, opium production and use was permitted in Pathet Lao - controlled parts of the country. During the interim period of coalition rule, Communist members of the government forced revocation of a 1971 law prohibiting opium poppy cultivation, trading, and consumption on the logic that international drug regulations were part of an imperialist (American) scheme. The Communist regime, with considerable prompting from UN narcotics representatives, has gradually swung around to a professed desire to abide by international conventions against the drug trade. The Soviet Union's ostensible support for international controls apparently was an important factor in bringing about a change in the official Lao attitude. The Lao government also has

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apparently been disabused of the idea that drug trafficking with the West would be a lucrative and reliable source of convertible foreign exchange.

Prospects: Lao Communist officials have expressed some interest in an internationally assisted crop substitution program. Last year they suggested a pilot project to a UN representative who advised them that such a program was dependent on an overall agreement with the Lao government. The UN envisions a \$6-million, six-year program if such an agreement can be worked out. Meanwhile, the Lao government is taking some steps toward opium control. Large opium dens in Vientiane and other towns have been ordered closed, and private transportation of opium from one locality to another has been banned. There is little early prospect of significant cuts in opium production, however. The hill tribes which account for most of Laos' output provided the most determined resistance to the Communist conquest of the country. The government finds it politic not to unduly aggravate their hostility and argues that it must move slowly in weaning the hill people from their entrenched ways.

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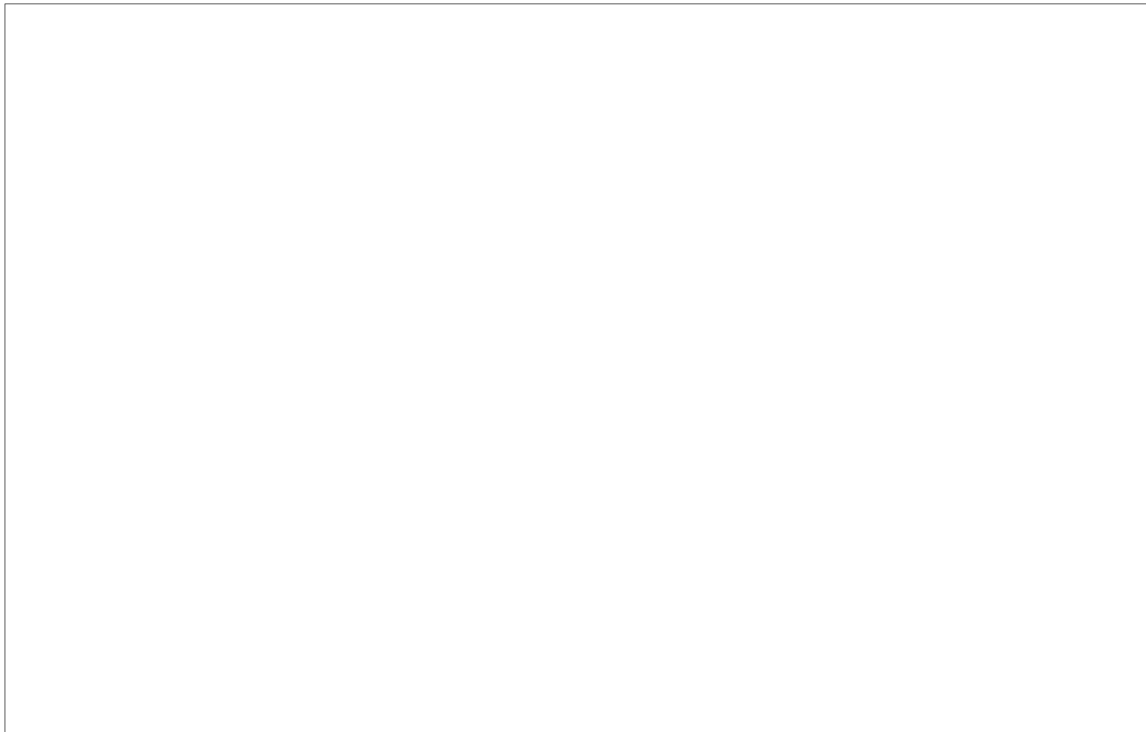
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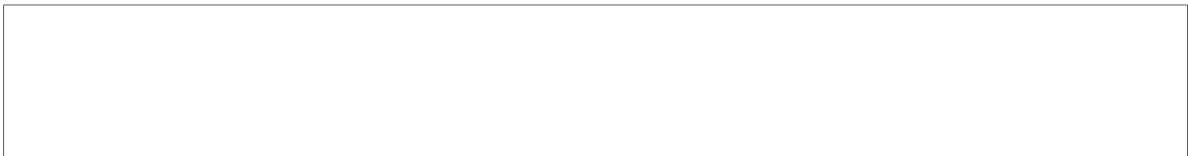
BRIEFS

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COLOMBIA: Some new trends in narcotics trafficking in Colombia have recently come to light. In the past, Bogota, Medellin, Cali, and other cities in Colombia have been noted for their refinement laboratories where raw coca paste from Peru or Ecuador was converted into street-vendable cocaine crystals. There are indications that some of the Colombian networks are beginning to buy refined cocaine directly from Bolivia. Also, Colombian "mules" or couriers who transport cocaine in their baggage or on their person are using Venezuelan and other third country passports to avoid the closer scrutiny afforded to bearers of Colombian passports who are more likely to be suspected as narcotics traffickers.

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THAILAND: One of the ten most important drug traffickers in Southeast Asia was executed on April 15, on the orders of the Prime Minister. His decision to use his summary powers under Article 21 of the Interim Constitution to order the execution of the drug trafficker underscores his determination to press Thailand's fight against narcotics and to deal harshly with drug traffickers, according to the American embassy in Bangkok. [REDACTED]

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PERU: The new draft law on control of dependency producing drugs has been approved by the four ministers charged with reviewing the draft, according to the minister of interior. The ministerial group was scheduled to present its findings to the President on April 21. The American embassy in Lima views the progress of the draft legislation as good news, although it warns that there is both passive and active resistance in a number of Peruvian circles to the adoption of a comprehensive anticoca/cocaine law--and even to the enforcement of existing laws against illegal coca production. The embassy notes that a basic government decision with far-reaching economic, social, and political consequences will be necessary to assure the passage and enforcement of the draft law. [REDACTED]

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AFGHANISTAN: US officials visiting Afghanistan have traveled briefly through some of the areas where opium poppies are under cultivation, and they have confirmed that Afghanistan will have a bumper crop this year. Despite the three-year-old law banning opium production, farmers are growing poppies even along the edges of major roads, and production everywhere in the area appears to be up as a result of the almost ideal weather conditions and the anticipation of

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higher prices. Presidential orders to provincial governors to destroy the crops apparently have gone unheeded, according to the embassy. [REDACTED]

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LAOS: A high-level Laotian official has rejected UN proposals for the use of \$200,000 in aid from the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control and has demanded that the funds be used instead in accordance with national plans for work projects using former drug addicts and for crop substitution and eradication efforts in another area. The UN official claims that he cannot "in good conscience" accede to the government's proposal for the use of UNFDAC funds. [REDACTED]

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NORWAY: Foreign Minister Knut Frydenland, during the course of a parliamentary debate on April 18 on the narcotics situation, announced the government's decision to make a grant of development funds to the UNFDAC. He did not specify the amount, however, nor did he specify what form Norwegian participation would take, although it apparently will be in support of crop substitution in Southeast Asia. [REDACTED]

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NEPAL: According to the local press, the largest drug dealer in the country has been arrested and, during the search of his property, over 100 rounds of ammunition and 11 walkie-talkies were found as well as 500 kilograms of hashish. Although he has escaped prosecution in the past, the embassy believes that he will have a difficult time getting out of the current charges against him because the mere possession of the ammunition and the transceivers raises security questions that the government cannot ignore. The embassy also suspects that the drug dealer was set up for the arrest because he was rumored to have double-crossed someone in a major drug deal. [REDACTED]

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INTERESTING READING

Press Conference Sums Up Successes Against Narcotics
(BULGARIA)--TNDD,* No. 294, April 13, 1977, pp. 33-34.

Rising Drug Addiction, Traffic Lead to Crackdown
(YUGOSLAVIA)--TNDD, No. 294, pp. 37-41.

Undercover Work Smashes International Drug Ring (EGYPT)--
TNDD, No. 294, pp. 63-66.

Raid Nets Large Drug Haul (EGYPT)--TNDD, No. 294,
pp. 67-68.

Mass Raids on Drugs Network by 800 Detectives (UNITED
KINGDOM)--TNDD, No. 294, pp. 72-74.

Importance of "Golden Triangle" Increasing (SINGAPORE)--
TNDD, No. 295, April 20, 1977, pp. 6-8.

Colombia, Others Becoming Important Drug-Smuggling
Centers (COLOMBIA)--TNDD, No. 295, pp. 20-23. This
is the translation of a recent article appearing in
Der Spiegel entitled "Cocaine in a Boa Constrictor."
In the article, Colombia is described as a "turn-
table" of the international drug trade.

La Guajira: Thriving Marijuana Center (COLOMBIA)--TNDD,
No. 295, pp. 33-42. This is the first of a series
of articles appearing in *El Tiempo* on drug traffick-
ing in Colombia.

Drug Network Discovered, 51 Charged (FRANCE)--TNDD, No.
295, pp. 68-69.

Interview with Dr. Lester Grinspoon appearing in High
Times, a drug-culture magazine, February 1977,
pp. 23-28. Grinspoon is a psychiatrist on the staff
of the Harvard Medical School and is noted for his
studies on marijuana and cocaine.

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